

Earning a Merit Award through WorkKeys

5, 5, 4, 3

Hmmm ... This week's winning Lottery numbers? Or maybe the correct answer to a math question on an IQ test?

In reality, these numbers are the new levels a high school student must attain on four WorkKeys job skills tests to qualify for a Michigan Merit Award of \$2,500. These new levels are Mathematics, level 5; Reading for Information, level 5; Locating Information, level 4; and Writing, level 3.

Dr. Barbara Bolin, director of the Michigan Department of Career Development and a member of the Michigan Merit Award Board, said the passing levels were modified by the board earlier this year to more accurately reflect the requirements of the workplace. "After two years of data collection, we recognized the need to adjust the WorkKeys scores and also to eliminate the Teamwork assessment because it is more appropriate for adult test takers."

She added, "It is hoped that with these changes, many more students will receive Merit Awards in the coming year."

Taking the WorkKeys assessment tests is one of three options offered to high school students to qualify for the Merit Award.

If a student does not receive passing scores on all four parts of the MEAP test to qualify for a Merit Award, he or she can still qualify by achieving passing scores on two parts of the MEAP test and performing in the top 25th percentile of the ACT or SAT; or by achieving passing scores on two parts of the MEAP test and achieving passing levels on four WorkKeys assessment tests.

Students who receive a Merit Award through MEAP and WorkKeys testing can use the \$2,500 award to enroll in a technical education program at an approved postsecondary educational institution. Approved programs include virtually all programs at technical, vocational, or apprenticeship institutions, as well as technical programs at traditional two-year or four-year institutions, such as engineering, science, and mathematics.

WorkKeys is a workplace skills assessment system used nationwide by employers,



students, workers, and educators. It gives students and workers an opportunity to document and advance their employability skills and provides employers with an opportunity to assess worker skills and customize training for a wide range of skilled jobs.

For more information about the Michigan Merit Awards or a listing of WorkKeys testing sites, call toll free, 1-888-95-MERIT; or log onto www.MeritAward.state.mi.us. To learn more about the WorkKeys system, see the ACT Web site at www.act.org/workkeys/index.html.

Career Readiness Certificate Gives Workers Competitive Edge

The value of the new Michigan Career Readiness Certificate—a portable credential that tells an employer that a job applicant has the necessary skills to be successful—can't be overestimated, says Dr. Barbara Bolin, director of the Michigan Department of Career Development.

Unveiled in January by Lt. Governor Dick Posthumus, the certificate gives workers an edge in finding a good job and employers an effective way to identify qualified workers.

"The Career Readiness Certificate is a great complement to the high school diploma and to MEAP, both of

which assess academic proficiency," Bolin said. "The certificate guarantees that recipients have the foundation skills necessary for job success, thereby distinguishing themselves from the competition."

Michigan residents can qualify for and receive the certificate by scoring at appropriate levels on four WorkKeys assessment tests—Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Writing. Testing is offered at 42 WorkKeys Service Centers located throughout the state and through participating schools and Michigan Works! Service Centers.

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The Director's Column

This has been a busy spring for everyone associated with FIRST Robotics. Two very exciting regional competitions were held at Eastern Michigan University and in Grand Rapids, and a tremendous national competition was held at Epcot in April. Once again, Michigan teams demonstrated extraordinary knowledge, skill, and talent.

I am most excited that WDIV-TV 4 in Southeastern Michigan has partnered with MDCD to produce a series of compelling commercials featuring FIRST Robotics. The theme of the commercials is "Engineering Your Mind," and they will be aired on WDIV-TV and WOOD-TV in Western Michigan through the end of the summer. They feature

"Ninety-two percent of all Michigan schools have committed to implementation of Career Pathways by 2004."

— Dr. Barbara Bolin, MDCD Director

students, FIRST Robotics founder Dean Kamen and other engineering professionals, and, of course, some robots. I hope this awareness campaign will encourage more schools and employers to become involved in FIRST.

I was honored to be part of the Michigan Career and Technical Institute's (MCTI) first Operation Fast Break graduation and to be able to congratulate the graduates personally. MCTI is a vocational training school for adults with disabilities operated by our Michigan Rehabilitation Services division. MCTI made the programmatic decision to incorporate the Fast Break model into its service delivery system with the expectation that it would significantly impact a student's potential for training and employment success.

One graduate, Jeff Barritt, markedly exemplified the strength of the Fast Break program. Initially, Jeff was very reserved and shy. By the end of the program, he participated in

group discussions, volunteered for role-playing exercises, and made presentations before the group. Jeff will begin the Electronics training program at MCTI in September.

I hope that soon we will see Fast Break Futures programs offered across the state as local workforce development boards sign contracts with training agencies. At MDCD, we believe this new occupationally specific training program will be of enormous benefit to Work First participants, allowing them to gain recognized credentials and move into the workplace quickly. The program prepares participants for MOUS (Microsoft Office User Specialist) certification and for the new Michigan Career Readiness Certificate.

It was a privilege to be a part of the Family Independence Agency's (FLA) 100th Achiever of the Month Award ceremony. Governor Engler personally congratulated the award recipient, Raquel Dubois of Detroit, and used the opportunity to re-emphasize the need for the federal government to maintain flexibility in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funding to allow governors to demonstrate that states have the desire and knowledge to create innovative programs that move residents toward self-sufficiency and independence.

It is hard to believe that we are rapidly coming to the end of another school year. I am pleased, however, that when the new school year begins, many thousands of Michigan high school students will do so with a well-thought-out Education Development Plan (EDP). As a reminder, the electronic version is available through www.TalentFreeway.org.

Also, for the first time, many schools will be heading into the new school year with a curriculum that includes Career Pathways. Ninety-two percent of all Michigan schools have committed to implementation of Career Pathways by 2004. This



Dr. Barbara Bolin

is great news as the pathways approach has proven to be a factor in decreasing dropout rates and helping students to focus on career choices.

The workforce development boards have been busy refining their strategic goals and operational plans. I am confident that, as a result, even better programs will be offered to residents in local areas. One major change to our system occurred recently when Governor Engler replaced the current Governor's Workforce Commission (GWC) with a State Workforce Investment Board, which will be known as the Michigan Workforce Investment Board (MWIB). In his letter to the Senate and House, Governor Engler stated, "Current federal law requires each state to establish a business-led state workforce investment board to oversee workforce development activities. The current commission only qualifies under 'grandfather' provisions of the law."

The new MWIB will have 53 members. Multiple agencies will now be represented, but majority membership will still be from the private sector.

The last meeting of the GWC will be May 15, and I would like to thank all Commissioners for the help and support they have given MDCD staff and me over the years.

Barbara Bolin

Technology Education Takes on New Significance

When we see or hear the word "technology," what do we think of? Many Americans immediately associate the term with computers and the Internet.

But technology is present in our lives in a vast number of other ways, from something as simple as our toothbrush to the complexity of a satellite. Simply stated, technology is anything that changes the natural world to satisfy our human needs.

Technology education—helping young people understand technology and its effects—has existed in Michigan schools for decades. Whenever a classroom of students constructs a model airplane to study the principle of flight or builds a greenhouse to alter the growing cycle of plants, technology education is taking place.

Today, however, technology education is taking on a new significance. A 2002 Gallup poll reveals that 97 percent of

Americans believe the study of technology should be included in the school curriculum.

Further, a new report from the National Academy of Engineering and National Research Council calls for "a broad-based effort to increase the technological literacy of all Americans," stating that technology education should begin as early as kindergarten and involve all subjects.

"Because technology education involves hands-on, problem-solving activities, students can easily connect what they learn to the real world," said Dr. Barbara Bolin, director of the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD). "As students enhance their technological literacy, they begin to associate technology with a variety of careers and career choices, helping them to focus on a Career Pathway."

Bolin noted that technology education is also important because of the many public policy decisions involving tech-

nology issues. "Technology education helps students understand the impacts of technology on people, society, and the environment," she said. "A technologically literate population can help Michigan and our nation sustain economic progress."

The Michigan Technology Content Standards and Benchmarks and the national Standards for Technological Literacy: Content for the Study of Technology provide the foundation for technology education in Michigan for grades kindergarten through 12. To receive a copy of these free materials, contact Dr. James S. Levande, MDCD Technology Education consultant, at (517) 373-6731 or levandej@michigan.gov.



First Rural Fast Break Program Opens

Lake County Rural Challenge Initiative (RCI) has opened a new Operation Fast Break program in Idlewild, Michigan, in partnership with Baldwin Community Schools. A \$60,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) has provided the funding.

"This is Michigan's first rural Operation Fast Break program, which will serve as the model for additional rural programs in the future," said Dr. Barbara Bolin, MDCD director. "As with all Operation Fast Break programs, students will benefit by acquiring stronger work habits and computer skills, increased motivation and productivity, and the ability to work with others."

Operation Fast Break programs are also offered in Flint, Owosso, Detroit, Hamtramck, Plainwell, and Battle Creek.

The accelerated, computer-assisted program prepares students for career-entry jobs and/or postsecondary education.

It is designed for those in need of higher skills, such as out-of-school young adults, high school students, college students needing remedial education, public assistance recipients, formerly incarcerated youth, displaced workers, and incumbent workers.

Operation Fast Break:

- b Brings math and reading up to readiness standards,

- b Introduces participants to word processing, spread-sheets, and basic computer functions,
- b Improves oral and written communication skills,
- b Teaches learning-to-learn and teamwork skills, and
- b Helps participants gain some career direction along with job-seeking skills.

For more information about the Idlewild program, call RCI at (231) 745-3862.

For general information about Operation Fast Break, contact Donna Beltz, MDCD Operation Fast Break con-

GEAR UP Programs Funded

Three Michigan school districts are receiving federal funds from the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) to operate local GEAR UP Michigan! programs to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

Flint Community Schools, in partnership with Central Michigan University; Muskegon Public Schools; and Detroit Public Schools will be working with MDCD to offer GEAR UP programs through a five-year, \$11.8 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. GEAR UP is the acronym for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs.

"In the first year of GEAR UP Michigan! we expect to serve thousands of students," said Dr. Barbara Bolin, MDCD director.

The locally designed services will include academic counseling, Education Devel-

opment Plans, after-school tutoring, career and college preparation assistance, mentoring, financial aid workshops, and professional development opportunities for teachers and counselors.

In keeping with federal requirements, services begin no later than seventh grade and continue with the same students through high school graduation. School districts receiving funding must be districts where at least 50 percent of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the National School Lunch Act. All students in the grade receive services, regardless of economic status.

The Governor's Workforce Commission will serve as Michigan's state advisory board for GEAR UP Michigan! to provide oversight, offer recommendations, promote dialogue, and support local projects.

Three other groups in Michigan have received federal GEAR UP funding independent



of the Michigan Department of Career Development. They are: Western Michigan University in partnership with Battle Creek Public Schools and Bangor Public Schools; Oakland University in partnership with the School District of the City of Pontiac; and Lake Michigan College in partnership with Benton Harbor Area Schools.

MDCD is working with these groups to extend professional development opportunities and coordinate Web sites and other parent and student resources available through MDCD.

Ferris Revamps Respiratory Care Program

A nationwide shortage of respiratory therapists to treat an increasing number of patients with breathing problems has prompted Ferris State University to redesign its Respiratory Care program. The goal is to make it easier for people to train for this field.

"People with a bachelor of science degree who are out of work could benefit the most from our Associate Degree of Applied Science in Respiratory Care because they would need the least amount of additional coursework," says David Zobeck, Respiratory Care clinical coordinator and assistant professor. "Our program also fits well for people with some college credit or no college background at all. Individuals, however, should have an interest in biology and health

and, above all, a desire to help people."

Ferris State is offering several courses online to allow individuals to meet entrance requirements at home or in association with a community college. The amount of coursework needed depends on each individual's previous credits and skills. Those without college credit can complete the first year at Ferris or at their local community college.

Those with a B.S. degree may be able to complete the two-year Respiratory Care program in as few as 15 months on campus, provided they have met core requirements and begin in the summer semester. During this time, 18 weeks are spent in a clinical internship in a hospital, usually near the person's home area.

Most respiratory care therapists work in hospitals, but opportunities also exist in physicians' offices, home care, and pharmaceutical sales. In the hospital, a respiratory therapist will assist patients of all ages, from neonatal infants to older adults with emphysema.

"Respiratory therapists work in nearly every patient care area in the hospital, but the most significant work is in critical care and emergency where they manage the mechanical ventilators," Zobeck said. "The need for skilled respiratory therapists in Michigan and the nation is great. Many hospitals offer sign-on bonuses."

For further information, contact Julian Easter, Respiratory Care program director; at (231) 591-2261 or online at www.ferris.edu.

Large, urban hospitals offer many different career specialties in the Health Sciences Pathway—surgeon, nurse, nutritionist, physical therapist, and human resources manager, to name just a few.

For the students of Medical Careers Instructor Renee Licavoli, St. Joseph's Mercy of Macomb is a hospital where they can explore the world of health sciences careers and discover which specialties are right for them.

Licavoli forged a partnership between her school (Dakota High in the Chippewa Valley Schools) and St. Joseph's four years ago to give her students real hands-on lessons in a hospital setting. "The experiences they are getting are phenomenal," she said. "They're experiences that can't be simulated in the classroom. And I'm finding that the more responsibilities I give the students, the more important they feel. They come back and say, 'I helped somebody today.'"

With 36 different departments, St. Joseph's offers

students in the two-year program a chance to spend blocks of time in various areas, such as intensive care, food and nutrition, radiology, and the pharmacy. "Most of the time, the students want to participate in direct patient care. But if they are not comfortable with direct care, they can work in other areas. Every department is important and provides students with essential skills necessary to successfully transition into the world of work directly from high school," Licavoli said.

Deanna Culberson, director of St. Joseph's School Health Network, noted that the benefits to the hospital equal those gained by the students. "The students help remind staff why they went into health care. When you see the students' enthusiasm, it revives you," she said. "Another huge plus is that our managers can do a one-month 'interview' with a student while the student is doing a rotation in that manager's department."

Scott Adler, vice president of Community Integration at St. Joseph's, said the hospital has

hired many of Licavoli's students over the past few years. "We have influenced many more," he said.

Chippewa Valley Schools is following the state curriculum guidelines for Health Sciences programs, said Carol Clark, Health Sciences Pathway consultant with the Michigan Department of Career Development.

"Chippewa Valley has integrated health sciences into all levels of the curriculum, including the elementary grades," she said. "The district's curriculum is also unique because there is a significant parental component. In addition, St. Joseph's has a full-time staff person at the hospital to work with the schools."

For more information on school-hospital partnerships, contact Clark at (517) 241-4355 or



Student Kirbee Bearden places the paralyzed arm of Joe Lucido on an arm board in Physical Therapy.

Take a Ride on the BeeFreeway

I know there's a lot of road construction going on, but what's this BeeFreeway?

Oh, you mean the new Web site that offers small businesses and not-for-profit organizations an online training system. It's pre-paid by the Michigan Department of Career Development.

Pre-paid? You mean like some of those envelopes I see?

Right. It's free to employers with 25 or fewer full-time employees through May 2004, courtesy of MDCD.

Why is this training a good idea? I mean, besides the fact that it's free.

You and your employees can gain valuable skills without

going through lengthy training sessions off-site. The modules are designed in small segments so they can be completed during down-time or between tasks.

What kind of training is offered?

Training modules are available in more than 1,300 subjects! A lot of the modules are in computer skills, such as database fundamentals and presentation software. You can also choose workplace skills, such as business management and customer service. The best way to become familiar with the offerings is to browse through the training library.

Is there a limit to the number of modules I can access?

The number of training modules you can complete is limited only by your time and ambition!

How do I sign up for BeeFreeway training?

Go to the TalentFreeway Web site at www.talentfreeway.org and follow the link to the BeeFreeway. Create your log-on profile, then proceed to the registration page.

And if I can't figure out ...

I know—if you get into trouble. For technical support, just contact Michigan Virtual University at (877) 844-0385 or beefreeway@mvumail.mivu.org. They'll be glad to help.

Assistive Computer Stations Spell Access

Getting a grip on life is a lot easier when the equipment is specially designed to let you do it. It gets even better if you can see or hear what you're working with.



Arthur Scott of Sterling Heights prepares his resume using an assistive computer station.

Bob Apczynski, coordinator of employment services for Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works!, and Colin Miller, an employment service specialist, recently

researched ways to make their job-finding services more available to customers with disabilities. After getting helpful advice from Joan McIntyre and Jenny Piatt of Michigan Rehabilitation Services, the two were able to obtain equipment

and software best suited for individuals with disabilities.

The results are computer stations at all four of the Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works! service centers—Clinton Township, Mount Clemens, Port Huron, and Roseville—uniquely designed for persons who use wheelchairs or who have learning or visual disabilities.

Some of the main features are:

- b Large 19-inch monitors for easier reading
- b Screen magnifiers that enlarge items to 16 times their normal size
- b Drop-and-drag magnifying glasses that can magnify both the on-screen keyboard and the typed text
- b Zoom caps on the on-screen keyboard to allow for text enlargement
- b Text readers to provide an audio transcript of the text

- b Text Help software, with audio read-back, to assist customers with composing resumes and letters
- b Adjustable desktops to accommodate wheelchairs

Michigan Rehabilitation Services counselors in Macomb and St. Clair counties are delighted that many of the job seekers they work with can now independently access resources available to them through word processing and the Internet. And, after Bob Arnold with the Commission for the Blind recently visited one of the newly accessible workstations, the commission made plans to begin referring customers immediately.

The intent of the accessible workstations—to expand opportunities for those confronting substantial barriers to employment—has been translated into reality for residents of Macomb and St. Clair counties.

Adult Education in Dearborn Targets Needs

Dearborn Adult Education, which has extensive experience providing English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, has adopted a number of innovative approaches with new partners over the past year to better serve local needs.

The Dearborn Adult Education program averages 1,600 students a year and serves an immigrant population speaking nearly 50 different languages. A full schedule of instruction is provided to many families from remote villages in Middle Eastern countries as well as a wide range of others. New initiatives:

Workplace Literacy

Employees of the Hollingsworth Logistics Group attend classes that accommodate their work shifts and are located at their work site. The curriculum was customized to meet the needs of both the employer and the ESL

students. Students learn English language specific to workplace safety, quality, and job communications.

Dislocated Worker Education

Laid-off workers from auto supplier Mexican Industries received ESL and ESL-GED instruction from Dearborn Adult Education. The administrative staff and instructors adjusted their personal holiday plans and scheduled morning, noon, and late afternoon classes for 160 laid-off workers with Partnership for Adult Learning (PAL) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) funding support.

Intensive ESL

Dearborn Adult Education has reorganized the existing dynamic curriculum into a compact immersion course of study supported with PAL

funding from the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance. Recently, 25 ESL students began classes scheduled for six hours a day, five days a week, for eight weeks.

Classroom Literacy Volunteer Corps

With over 67 percent of ESL students functioning at low English levels, Dearborn Adult Education's certified teachers needed assistance with students having the greatest learning difficulties. Twenty-four volunteers at five sites have been matched with 100 low-level ESL adult students. With teacher supervision, the volunteers provide literacy assistance to those needing personal attention.

For more information, contact Patrick Barley, Dearborn Adult Education, at (313) 582-4817, ext. 151, or BarleyP@dearborn.k12.mi.us.

In January of 2000, the responsibilities of the Michigan Department of Career Development expanded from supporting local workforce development systems to building local career development systems. The "Building Strategic Partnerships for Career Development" initiative, launched in February 2000, addressed this new charge. Its challenges included how to structure a "community leadership" system for human resource development, connect the vast educational enterprise and the workforce system, and integrate multiple funding plans into a single strategic plan with a common vision.

Led by the state's 25 Workforce Development Boards and 25 Education Advisory Groups, the \$5 million initiative began by identifying key trends in each region and top-priority goals for the local career development system. Last October, all regions completed their strategic plans,

complete with success measures for the future and backed by an operational plan. Some initiatives covered by the strategic plans are:

Population trends in the Capital Area region identified a need for more English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction. ESL programs were expanded at Lansing Community College through programs with intensive instruction and flexible hours of operation. More than 100 students signed up within 48 hours. This model has been exported to 11 other areas.

In the Northwest Michigan region, there has been a great influx of Eastern European, Asian, and Hispanic immigrants. Special ESL software covering several languages has now been installed in four regional learning labs. Further, a partnership with the Traverse City Schools now offers ESL classes for the entire family.

Washtenaw County concluded in its strategic plan

that its Michigan Works! Service Center could be improved by expanding the presence of Washtenaw Community College. Now the community college is a partner at the center, providing \$100,000 in tuition vouchers for customers not eligible for other funding. WCC also offers computer literacy programs on-site.

For more information on the strategic planning initiative, see www.michigan.gov/mdcd under Research and Reports, Building Partnerships.

GRCC Named Award Finalist

After competing with community colleges nationwide, Grand Rapids Community College was selected as one of nine Bellwether Award finalists in the workforce development category for its involvement in the MDCD Building Strategic Partnerships for Career Development initiative. The GRCC partnership was unique because the college participated in the environmental scan and strategic planning processes at both the state and regional levels. For more information, see www.mscan.org/reports/reports/.

Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Develops 'BEST' Practices

Employee retention is a subject that gets employers' attention, especially when it involves a better idea. Companies looking for best practices in the Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Michigan Works! region now make it a practice to use BEST—Business Enhancement Services and Training.

BEST delivers customized solutions to employers through a single point of contact at the Michigan Works! Service Centers located in Benton Harbor, Dowagiac, Niles, Paw Paw, and South Haven. The major program areas are workforce enhancement programs, customized outplacement services, and coordinated services and training.

Workforce enhancement efforts focus on benchmarking cutting-edge ideas, the Tri-

County Workforce Information Sharing Exchange (WISE), and employer-specific workforce services. Customized outplacement emphasis is on serving employers and displaced employees and their families. Training is offered in occupation-specific fields, along with targeted recruiting and hiring.

An example of BEST in action is the customized job fair, which provides an employer with pre-screened applicants who possess the background, skills, and attributes—determined in advance with the employer—critical to success on the job.

"This is a time-saving, cost-effective service that we provide to employers through the Michigan Works! system," said Jim Lautenschleger, employment and resource coordinator for the Berrien-Cass-

Van Buren Michigan Works! agency. "It's an extension of their human resources department, it's effective, and it works very well."

BEST was developed following a local "Day of Collaboration," in which 375 business, education, and economic development leaders gathered to determine how they could be proactive in business development and retention.



Susan Edge, Food Stamp specialist at Michigan Works!, and Barry Baker, human resources director with BoWater Nuway in Benton Harbor, pre-screen potential workers for BoWater Nuway.

Economics Lessons at the Mall

On February 28, 22 fifth graders from Cummings Elementary School scurried through RiverTown Crossings mall in Grandville, searching for sale items, computing discount prices, learning about just-in-time inventory, and calculating square footage and rental costs.

These students were some of the more than 2,000 who have participated in the award-winning* MEAPonomics program, a unique collaborative effort led by Grandville Public Schools in partnership with Jenison and Hudsonville public schools. These three districts have teamed with RiverTown Crossings mall to develop a learning initiative designed to integrate economics and career education into the curriculum.

One of the components leads fifth graders through a series of activities that helps them use economics vocabulary, apply math skills, learn business etiquette, and develop a sense of monetary responsibility. "I liked learning more about economics and how to do percentages!" beamed Jonathan DeHart, as he ate lunch at the mall food court.

Diane Bigelow, the educational consultant who coordinated the half-day of activities, said: "I think it's a great program and I like to do it! It gives students great hands-on experiences to connect to the real world." She presented an introduction to the group of attentive fifth graders using colorful pie charts to show the costs involved in running a retail store. "Only about two percent of each item sold is profit after all the costs of operating the store are deducted," she explained to the students. They had gathered at the School Spirit!!! retail store, which is largely run by students from the three districts and features merchandise supporting area schools.

Following Bigelow's intro-

duction, the students split into two groups, with one taking calculators and clipboards to Younkers for a more in-depth exploration. The other group took their clipboards and worksheets to Sears for another set of hands-on activities. At Younkers, the students looked at store displays and tried to guess the demographics of the target customer.

"What do you see at this display?" asked Bigelow. "Perfume!" answered one student. "Makeup!" answered another. "Who do you think will be attracted to this display?" she asked. "Women!" a student replied. Bigelow explained that as much as 89 percent of store purchases at Younkers are made by women, so the store places a display that is attractive to women at the entrance.

The tour of Younkers was punctuated with opportunities for students to use mathematics skills in a real-world setting. "If this item is \$19.95 and it is marked 10 percent off, how much will it cost?" the students were asked. Using calculators and clipboards, they quickly completed the task and volunteered their answers. Students were also asked about the behavior of the sales consultants in the store to emphasize the importance of making a good impression on potential customers.

After walking the Younkers sales floor, the students moved on to the warehouse that serves the large department store. There they learned about just-in-time inventory, which permits the store to maintain a small warehouse to temporarily store delivered items before they are transferred to the retail floor.

The second group of students, led by Becky Kirk, a teacher from

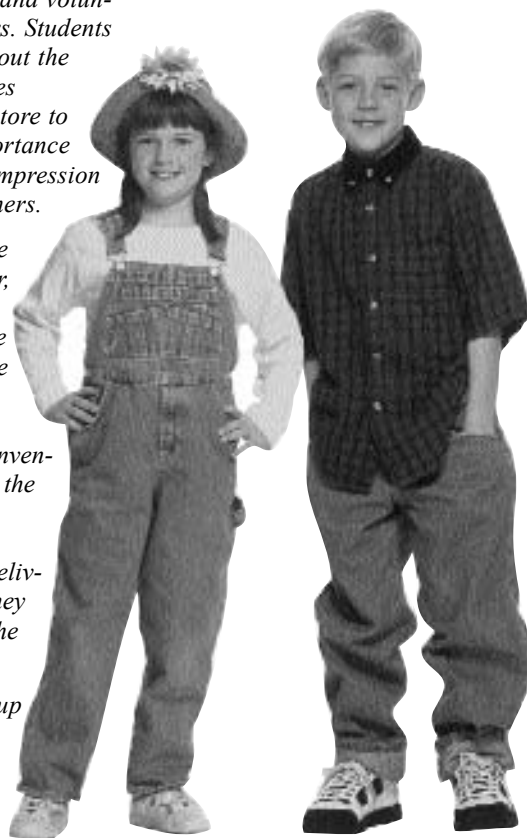
Cummings Elementary, walked to Sears, where they completed worksheets requiring them to apply math skills, review vocabulary, and practice interviewing techniques. Following the interviewing practice session, the students interviewed store personnel regarding the concept of opportunity cost.

John Schwalm, school-to-career coordinator at Grandville and one of the founders of the initiative, believes it provides valuable hands-on experiences for students. "This program provides an opportunity for students to examine how businesses operate and exposes them to the basic economic principles of capitalism and entrepreneurship," he said.

Another key benefit is that it builds a strong link between mall merchants and community schools, he added.

For more information, contact Schwalm at (616) 254-6467.

*2002 Governor's Excellence in Practice Award for career education programs



Trade academies are charter schools with a difference. What makes them stand out are their strong links to local industry and employers.

Although the term “trade academy” is somewhat unique to Michigan, the concept has been implemented in many other states as well. In these other states, similar schools are called “employer-linked charter schools” or equivalent titles.

Terminology can be confusing, because other similar-sounding terms such as “trade schools” and “career academies” can also be heard in everyday usage. Since trade academies are a type of charter high school, they are not “trade schools” in the sense of proprietary schools, whose goal is strictly to provide vocational training. They are more like “career academies”—a broad concept that describes schools of choice integrating academic with vocational education, organized around a career theme, and featuring partnerships with local employers.

The difference is that although career academies may sometimes be freestanding schools, they are most often organized as a school-within-a-school inside a traditional high school. Trade academies are usually structured as charter schools (also known as “public school academies”) and have an industry-specific focus.

What makes Michigan’s trade academy approach noteworthy is that it combines two different threads of current school reform efforts—career academies and charter schools—in the same independent facility. The curriculum of each academy is designed in partnership with business and industry to provide occupational and work-based learning, along with an endorsed high school diploma. Academics are integrated with occupational learning through a curriculum and skill standards designed with the help of employers.

Local employers also provide work-based training opportunities such as job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and technical training. Businesses may also provide assistance through donations of equipment and supplies.

Between 1995 and 1997, 14 trade academies opened in Michigan. One of the most prominent is the Henry Ford Academy of Manufacturing Arts and Sciences, located in Dearborn (www.hfacademy.org). Not only was this school featured in the Harvard Education Letter in 2001, it also received one of Michigan’s 2002 Governor’s Excellence in Practice Awards.

As in any dynamic area, change is an integral part of the trade academy process. Some of the original 14 schools have moved their locations, reorganized, or changed their focus. However, since 1997 a

number of new schools have also been organized following the trade academy model. (For a listing of trade academies in Michigan, go to the Web site of the Michigan Association of Public School Academies, www.charterschools.org/schools.html.)

Because trade academies are relatively new, there is little in the way of research or evaluation studies.

However, Public Policy Associates (PPA) in Lansing was recently involved in a federally funded project to profile and document employer-linked schools across the country, including several case studies in Michigan. This report, issued in June 2000, is titled *Employer-Linked Charter Schools: An Introduction* and is available on the Web at www.employercharterschools.com/learn/pubs.htm.

Subsequently, the Center on Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has launched a federally funded initiative that builds on the previous PPA work. This initiative will create a database of employer-linked charter schools and select some of those schools for further study. An abstract describing the study is available



Check Out the Latest Library Acquisitions

Math...Who Needs It?!

By Jaime Escalante
TPR 00.0000 0186-VT

Math! Some people love it. Others are terrified of it. Yet anyone who wants to thrive in the next century’s technology-based economy must learn to think confidently with words and numbers. This hour-long television special was originally broadcast on PBS during “Back to

School” week, and has since become a widely used resource to motivate math achievement in schools and homes across the nation. 60 minutes.

Outcomes for Success! 2000

By Jane Reisman & Judith Clegg
TE 00.0000 687

Outcomes for Success! outlines a series of steps to help you achieve success

through outcome evaluation. You will also learn how to minimize any potential negative consequences of evaluation. 110 pp.

To borrow these titles or obtain more information about the MCCTE Library and its holdings, contact Jackie Hohenstein at 1-800-292-1606, ext. 5.

Hats Off to Exceptional People

James Kehrer

James Kehrer, a Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) veterans employment specialist for Berrien County, has been named the first recipient of the Robert T. Pendleton Award for Excellence in Service to Veterans. Kehrer has worked for MDCD's Employment Service Agency for the past 15 years.

"Those who nominated Jim describe him as someone who advocates articulately and passionately for those he serves," said Dr. Barbara Bolin, MDCD director. "He works tirelessly and consistently to ensure outreach to veterans and goes above and beyond to help them with job placement assistance."

Kehrer was also honored for

his service to veterans in November 2000 when he received a Bolin Recognition Award, given to MDCD employees for exemplary work. At that time, he was nominated for exceptional performance in assisting a homeless veteran. He helped the veteran obtain identification, paid the fee for the identification, helped him find a job, drove him to work, packed lunches for him, and even laundered his clothes.

"I am grateful to the veterans who allow me the privilege, for varying durations, to become a part of their lives," Kehrer said. "As I become a part of their lives, they in turn become a part of my life. I would only hope that their lives are enriched as much as they enrich mine."

Honors are not new to Kehrer. He received the Highest Award for Achievement in his Dale Carnegie class, and

was also selected as Marathon Dealer of the Year from among 850 other Michigan dealers in 1970.

He is currently chair of the Homeless Resolution Network of Berrien County and is also a member of the American Legion, Post 331, in Bridgman. He served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968, when he received an honorable discharge.

The Pendleton Award was established by the Employment Service Agency to commemorate Robert T. Pendleton's commitment to helping veteran job seekers. A Viet Nam veteran, Pendleton was deputy director of the Michigan Department of Career Development when he passed away in December 2000. Persons from any sector of the workforce development system (local, state, federal, public, or private) that impacts services to Michigan's veteran job seekers are eligible to be nominated for the award.



Mickie Dietz

The Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) held its first Operation Fast Break graduation in March, giving its project coordinator, Mickie Dietz, a sense of both accomplishment and pride.

Joining MCTI in October, Dietz has been the key staff person responsible for the success of the new initiative on the Barry County campus.

"Operation Fast Break at MCTI is a different model from the other Fast Break programs across the state," said Robert Davis, director of Michigan Rehabilitation Services, which oversees the school's operation. "Mickie played a very major role in creating a model that emphasizes literacy and interpersonal relationships. She essentially broke new ground, which is all the more remarkable given the fact that she was

hired to be lead instructor and quickly became the individual who developed the program."

Dietz worked with the Delton-Kellogg Schools' Adult Education Program to gear Operation Fast Break to the needs of the students planning to enroll at MCTI. After graduating from Fast Break, students are prepared to successfully complete one of the school's 13 career training programs.

"MCTI is dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities develop vocational and social skills that enhance employment opportunities," Dietz said. "The philosophy of the Fast Break program meshes well with that of



MCTI in that both focus on the whole person. I have seen substantial gains in basic literacy issues, but also in the areas of self-esteem and attitudes toward education."

Dietz, who lives north of Grand Rapids, has a 100-mile round trip commute each day to MCTI. "I was a little apprehensive about the long drive at first, but it is no problem," she said. "I look forward to going to work every day. I love this job! It is the most exciting and rewarding experience of my career to date," she said. "The collaboration I have seen between departments and individuals to help this new program succeed has been outstanding."

Donna Gillespie

Donna Gillespie's International Business class students know that even how you present your business card is extremely important in some countries. A Ferndale High School teacher since 1984, Gillespie excels at making business education classes fun, exciting, and relevant for her students. She is so good at it that she was named the Newsweek-WDIV Oakland County Outstanding High School Teacher of the Year in 2001.

Gillespie has her International Business students correspond via the Internet with corporations located throughout the world so they can learn about the cultures and business practices of other countries. She also frequently brings speakers into her classroom from different businesses and countries.

Gillespie said these practices are welcomed by her

students. "They love it. Concepts that might otherwise seem dry come to life, and they realize how essential some skills are. It's much better than just reading the chapters, doing the questions, and taking the tests."

She also said that since last year's tragedy on September 11, many students have told her that they now realize how important it is to understand other cultures.

Among the most challenging aspects of teaching, Gillespie said, are "trying to stay one step ahead of the kids in terms of technology, and making sure our curriculum meets their needs."

Chairperson of Ferndale High School's business department and applied technology department, she makes sure she stays up-to-date on what is going on in business by working in that field during the

summer. "You really see the skills and concepts you should be teaching," she said, noting that she has found companies very willing to let students and teachers know what kinds of skills they need in the workplace.

Gillespie said she loves the fact that the subject she teaches is "constantly changing. I'm lucky to make my living doing what I love."

A Ferndale High School graduate herself, she has a bachelor of science degree in business education from Western Michigan University and a master of arts degree in occupational education from The University of Michigan.



MDCD Calendar of Events

May 15	Governor's Workforce Commission Meeting Time: 1:30 p.m. Location: Ferris State University Contact: Sharon Walker at (517) 335-7421
May 15	Career Fair & Job Opportunity Day 2002 Time: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Location: Knights of Columbus, Standish Contact: Jim Garrison at (989) 773-5925
June 18	Risk Management Planning for Work-Based Learning Workshop Location: Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville Contact: Gordon Love at (616) 365-2261
	Michigan Workforce Investment Board Locations and dates to be determined

Captioners Are in High Demand

The demand for broadcast captioners—those who translate the spoken word into readable text for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing—will grow by 300 percent over the next four years, according to the National Court Reporters Association.

This soaring demand is in response to a federal requirement that all television programs be captioned by 2006.

For more information, visit the Web site <http://www.bestfuture.com>, or contact the National Court Reporters Association Member Services and Information Center at 1-800-272-6272.



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Career Readiness Certificate Provides Edge

(Continued from pg.1)

WorkKeys is a workplace skills assessment system used throughout the U.S. Developed by ACT, it measures the skill levels of workers and also documents the skills required by occupations and specific jobs. "WorkKeys is an integral part of Michigan's career development system," said Bolin. "It provides a common language between the business world and those who provide education and training for future workers."

The Department of Career Development has launched an informational campaign to make the public more aware of the value of the Michigan Career Readiness Certificate through news releases, posters, exhibits, speaking engagements, and TV spots.

The certificate was developed by the Michigan Council on Technical Excellence, chaired by Posthumus and whose members represent business, labor, and education. It has also been endorsed by the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Manufacturers Association.

For more information, call toll-free 1-866-MY-GOALS (voice/TTY) or log onto www.michigan.gov/mdcd.

